

Christ's Message to the Church – Philadelphia **Rev.3:7-13**

Today we will look at the church in Philadelphia, one of the seven churches to which Jesus sent messages through the apostle John.

Philadelphia is known as “Alashehir (city of god, exalted city). It was believed to be founded by *Attalus Philadephus, so called because of his love and loyalty to his older sibling*. This city was very syncretistic, from Anatolian and Hellenistic practices. Its patron deity was Dionysus, god of wine. This city was almost destroyed in 17AD by an earthquake that devastated Sardis and nearby cities. The population of the city was small due to the constant earthquakes; this caused people to move outside the city. Philadelphia became a missionary center for spreading the Greek language and customs into eastern parts of Lydia and Phrygia. Some believe disciples of Paul planted this church there.

Read text: Rev.3:7-13

Title of Christ: **The one who is holy and true** (Holy =Separate; true=real genuine, truth in contrast to false)

Who holds the key of David.

The key of David: **Isa.22:20-23** “In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. **21**I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him. He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. **22**I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. **23**I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a seat^a of honor for the house of his father.

Eliakim carried a heavy key on a loop slung on his shoulders, indicating his power to grant or deny others an audience with the king. He alone provided access to the presence of the king. Jesus is the one who grants or denies access to the presence of God. He holds the authority.

“What he opens no one can shut and what he shuts, no one can open”

Jesus is also the one who holds the key to Hades and death. **Rev.1:18**

Acknowledgment: Jesus knows what goes on in the church: **“I know your deeds, see, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.”** There is an open door of opportunity for this church in this city. When God opens a door for you, no one will be able to close it and when he closes the door for you stop trying to push it open because you won't.

*-I know you have little strength,
-but you kept my word and haven't denied my name*

Those of the synagogue of Satan will fall down before this church acknowledging their error and recognizing that Jesus has truly loved this church. These people from the church of Satan (2:9) are Jews who claimed to be God's people, but since they have rejected His messiah and persecuted his people, they are liars. Jesus said they are not true Jews, but sons of the Devil. They belong to the synagogue of Satan for rejecting Jesus.

Jesus once again acknowledge that this church kept his command and endured patiently (v.10)
This church kept Christ's word which means they truly loved Jesus. Jesus said that if you love me, you will keep my commandments (**John 14:15, 21**)

Jesus reward faithfulness and perseverance (v.10) He promised protection from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole earth. This is a reference to the tribulation since it will come upon the whole earth. To test those who live on the earth. Sometimes, God's protection from this awful ordeal means death for his people. Anyone who died or dies now is already protected from the distress that will come to this world.

Jesus is coming! (v.11) *I am coming soon, hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.* The word soon in the Greek implies something suddenly, unexpectedly, something imminent; you can count on it. The church is called to hold fast or be strong in perseverance, love, faith, sound teaching until Jesus comes.

Let no one take your crown. *Work in the kingdom of God is rewarded, but laziness is condemned;* you could lose your reward. This is an athletic imagery, which the apostle Paul uses often in his letters. The Jews of the synagogues of Satan tried to disqualify these Christians from running their race for Christ. **But the church held on to Christ and his teaching.** Paul encourages the Corinthians to run in such a way as to receive the prize. (**1 Cor.9:24**) to the Galatians he said, you were running a good race, who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth (**Gal.5:7**) **Jesus said that in order to keep your crown, you must hold on (hold fast, be strong) to what you have.** (*Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown*)

Promise for the conquerors:

-Be made a pillar in the temple of God...never again will he leave it (security, no disturbance would come to force you out)

-God's name and the name of the city of God written on him

-Jesus' new name written on him

Names inscribed signify ownership, identification. God's people will be known as his people and citizens of his city. "I will be their God and they will be my people."

What is the Spirit saying to the churches? What does Jesus expect of his church today?

-Jesus expects a church that remains faithful to him until the end.

-Jesus is the one who opens doors of opportunity or closes those doors. The church must learn to walk through the open doors God opens and learn to stop trying to force open a door God has shut.

Jesus expects a church that hold fast to sound teaching, love, faith, service, patience. A church that endures persecution for his name's sake.

-Christ expects a church of overcomers.